OLYMPICS

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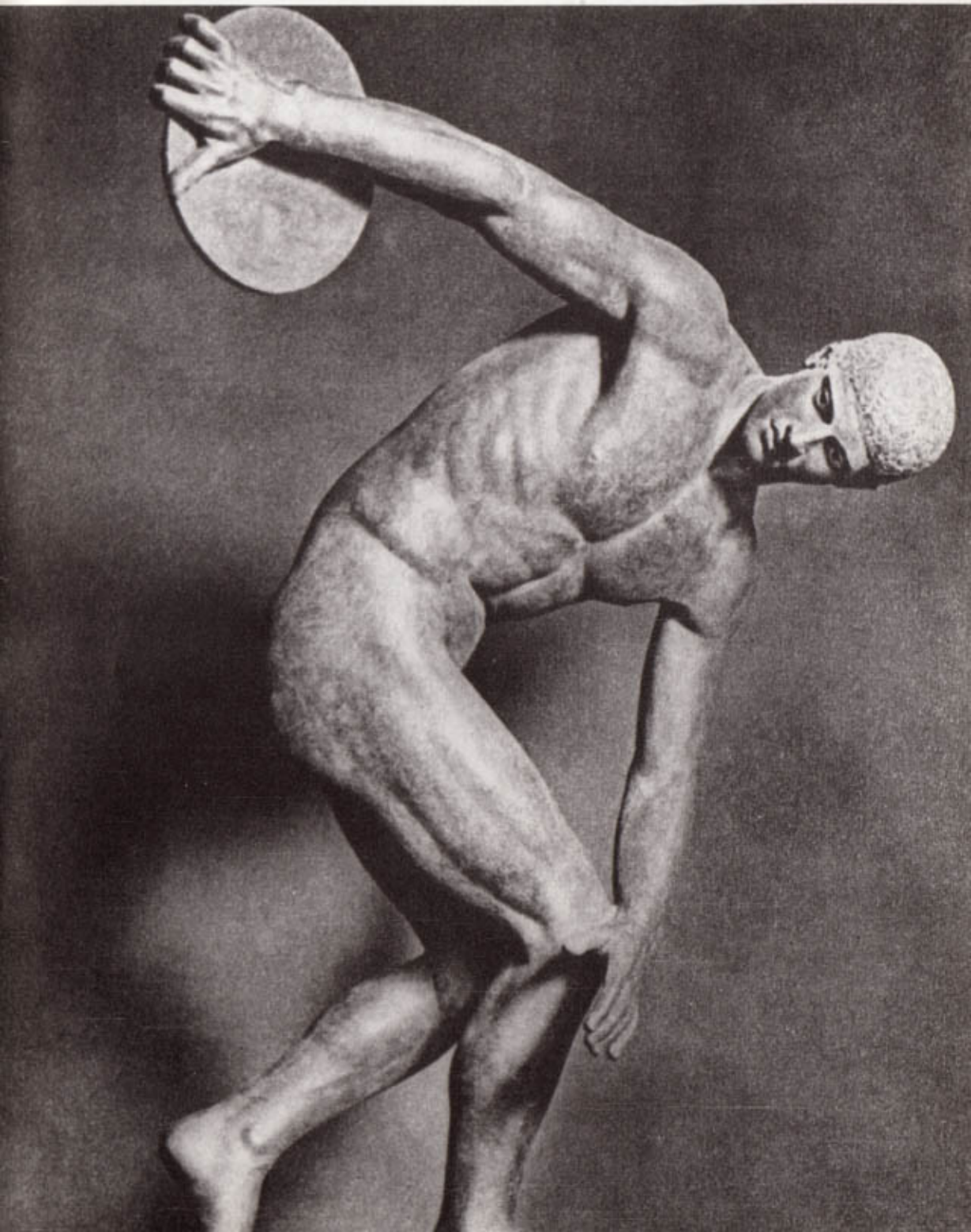
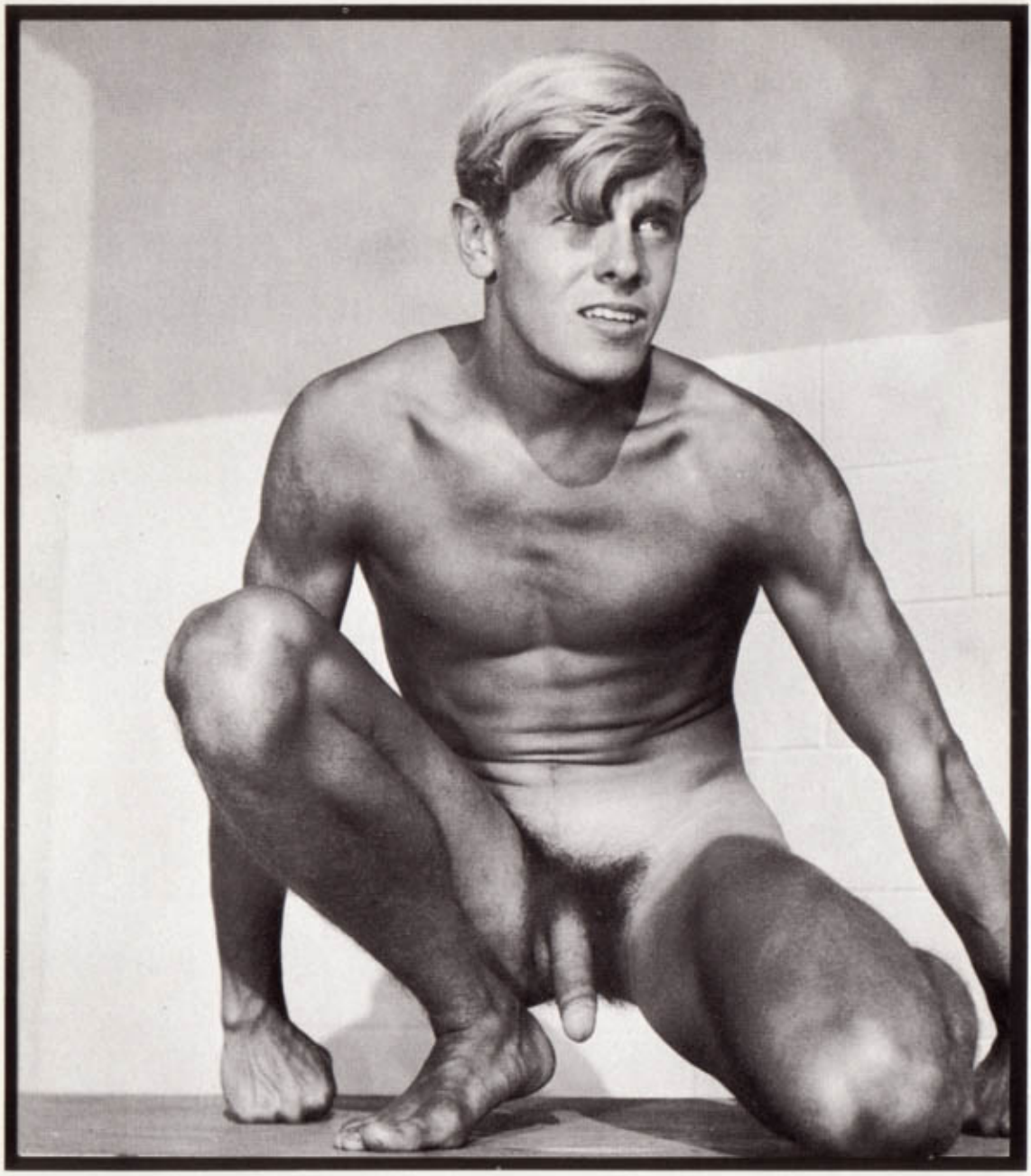




OLYMPICS (Vol. 1, No. 1—May, June, July 1968), published quarterly by Figures & Physiques Pub. Co., 5436 Fernwood Avenue, Los Angeles, Calif. 90027, is an educational, scientific, sociological and cultural publication which illustrates the conviction that the human body is clean and wholesome. That increased public understanding of this point of view will contribute to the well-being and advancement of the public. Address business and editorial correspondence to P.O. Box 2668, Los Angeles, Calif. 90028. All rights reserved. This publication must not be reproduced in any form without written permission. Copyright ©1968 by Figures & Physiques Pub. Co.

LOVE FOR THE BEAUTIFUL

There is a passage from the Greek poet Pindar that clearly expresses the essence of the pride and honor inherent in the contests comprising the Olympic Festivals of ancient Greece. It reads: "Before the gates of excellence, the high gods have placed sweat. Long is the road thereto and rough and steep. But when the height is achieved then is there duty so hard in keeping."

To further gain some historical and esthetic insight into the importance of the Olympics, we need only to look at the Greek lifestyle in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C. From childhood on, every Greek boy was taught athletics in the tradition of his mentors. A finely formed body was of major importance within the Greek scheme of things. The Greeks so worshipped beauty that, as we can see in their basreliefs and sculptures, they equated it with goodness. Plato expressed the early concept of beauty-goodness thus: "From the love of the beautiful comes every good thing in heaven and earth." In his **Republic,** he wrote: "Virtue will be a kind of health and beauty and good habit of the soul, as vice will be a disease and a deformity of the soul."

The mores of ancient Greece were such that no man or boy was ever ashamed to admit to a con-

suming interest in beauty, in beauty's appreciation and attainment. Instinctively the Greeks lived and worked in and around the arts. Boys painted, carved in stone, learned to play the flute and the lyre, to sing and to dance. Dancing was considered a kind of physical training and, as such, was used to strengthen and tone up the body. Thus it is understandable why many Greek dances were physically exhausting and often even warlike.

Performing his exercises and participating in athletic feats, the Greek male was completely naked. It was only manly and esthetically true to take pleasure in watching and even admiring the nude physiques of athletes. And a man or a boy hadn't the slightest fear of being slurred for perverseness if he was heard to say something like "Kalos pais — the boy is fair," in rapt admiration of the miraculous work of art of which Greek athletes of the time were the incarnation.

It is not surprising, then, that the Greeks considered the Persians and Egyptians, and other cultures like theirs, effeminate for all their flowing robes, their soft and corpulent bodies, their mincing steps and sweet perfumes. This is but one indication of the fact that what you think determines to a large degree what you are, and your concepts of "the beautiful and good" (an early Greek expression) depend, of course, on your lifestyle, the trappings of your culture, your knowledge, and social mores.

It generally happens that what everyone tries to imitate is whatever happens to be in vogue at the time. This imitation can be either beneficial or detrimental to the individual, depending on your point of view. The typical Greek of early times, for example, would pity the poor boy brought up among Egyptians, Persians or Scythians. Imbued with the idea that the good life is to be lived by way of exotic clothes and cloying scents, the typical Egyptian boy must have been utterly amazed (if he ever had the opportunity) to see Greek soldiers participating in athletic events completely naked; or dancing, clad only in a bronze shield; or walking arm in arm, hand in hand to and from their training grounds.

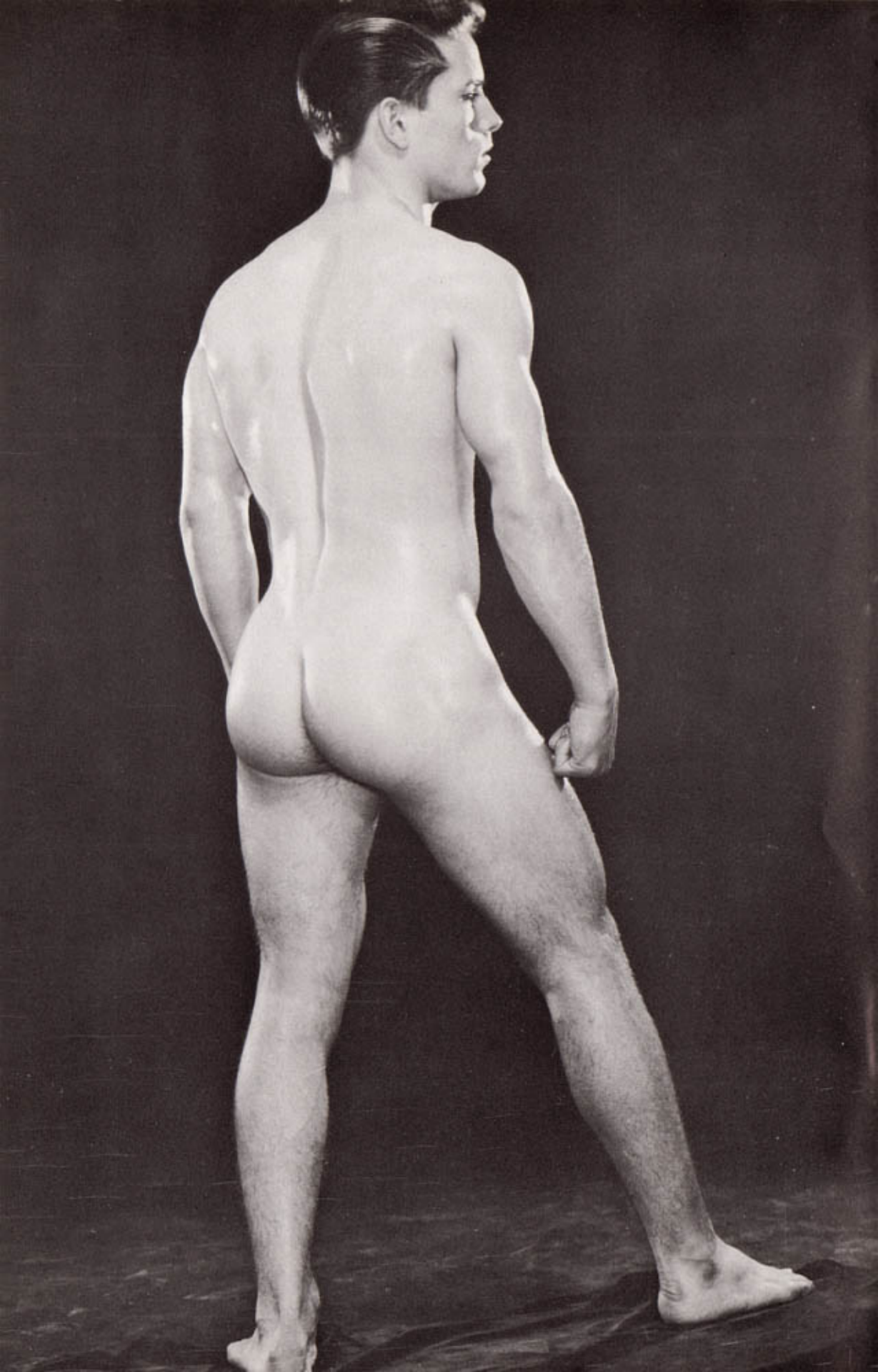
Essentially, then, this is the difference between

the two lifestyles, where in the one the naked male form was held to be both the symbol and the reality, the actual embodiment, of strength and virtue, innocence and vigor; and in the other, where the body is basically a hanger for long flowing robes, the symbols of status and refinement. It is precisely because of the Greek lifestyle, its adulation of "the good and the beautiful," that whenever the naked male form is brought up either for discussion or study, for sense of direction the ideal has to be found in ancient Greece. "Nothing in excess" epitomized the concentration on the perfect balance, the proper exercise of mind and body.

Discipline was not easy. When boys became **epheboi,** teenagers, they were expected to learn the rules of running, jumping, throwing the javelin and the discus, dancing, chariot racing, boxing and wrestling. Paintings from Greek vases and excerpts from the literature of the time let us know that the boys' trainers were stern taskmasters. Any youth caught in faulty execution of a sport quickly felt the sting of his trainer's whipstick.

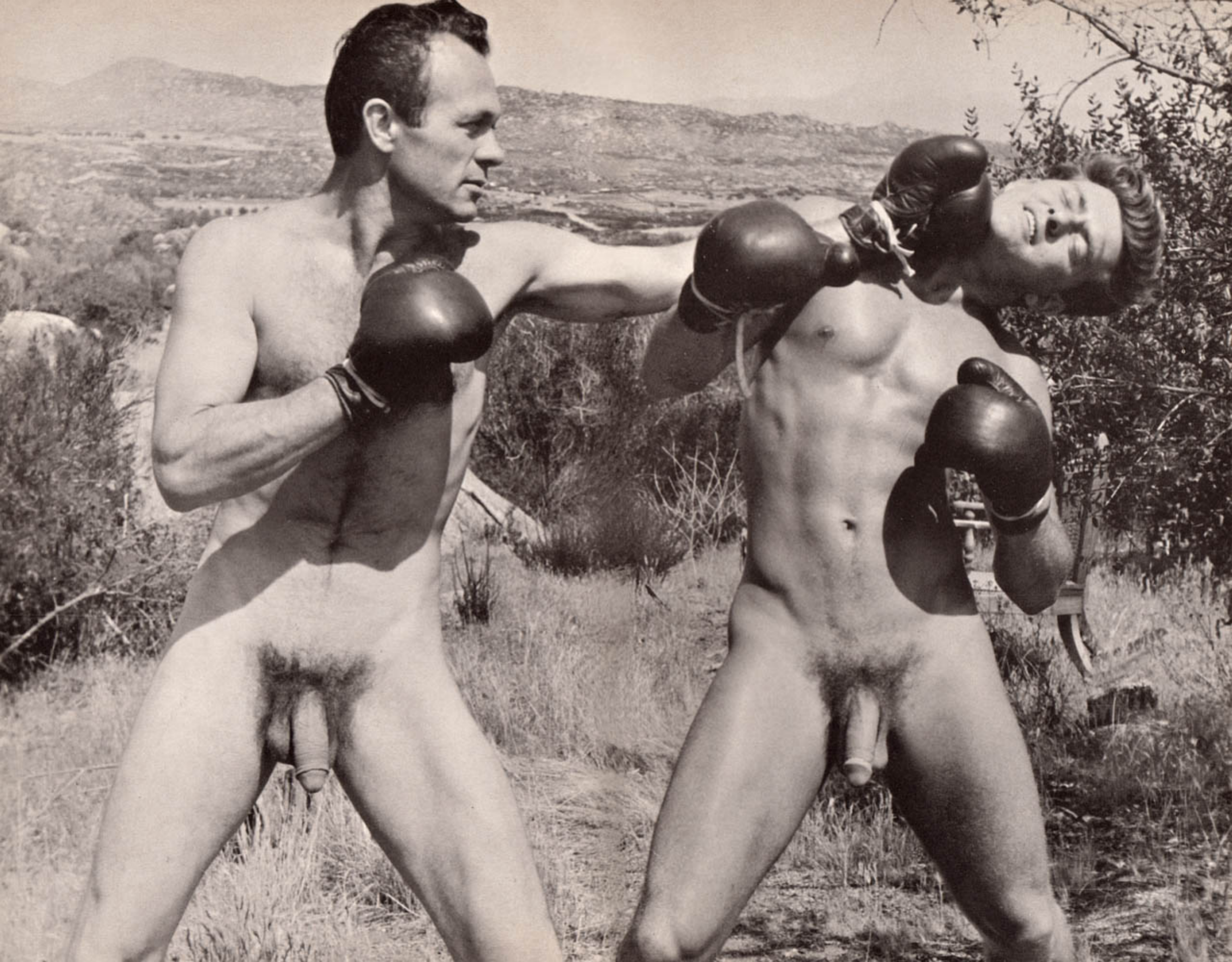
Practiced daily and with concentration and devotion, the Greek boys' curriculum soon became as much a part of their lives as eating and sleeping. The rewards of these exercises are obvious to anyone of any age who has ever followed a strict regimen for daily fitness. Along with increased ability to play sports and perform one's daily routines, come self-confidence, poise and a healthy self-concept that generates from within, a glowing result of discipline and self-improvement.

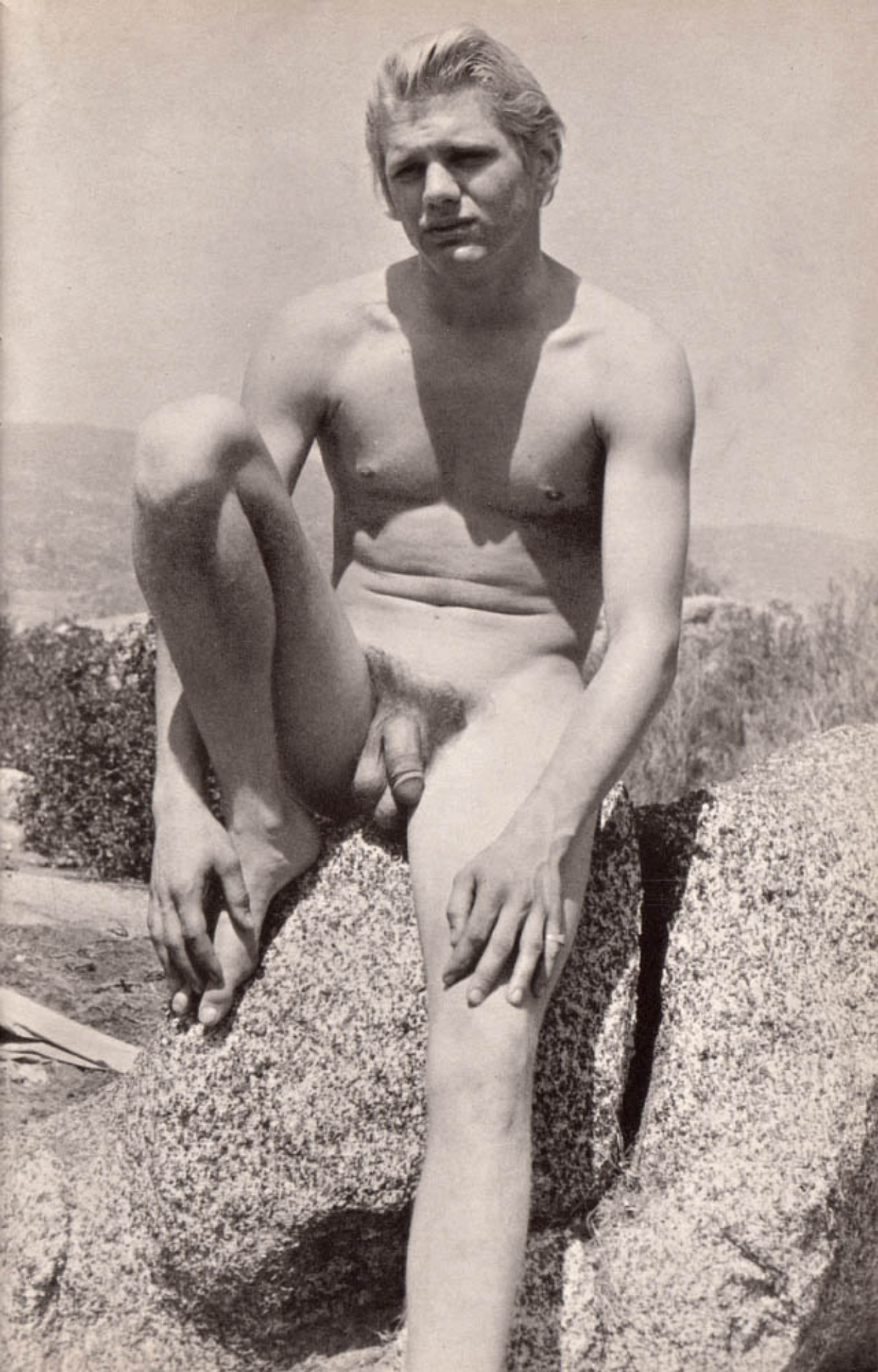
The Olympics were of course the final testing grounds for mental and physical excellence, the highest temporal reward for the attainment of "the good and the beautiful." The Olympics were five days in duration, the first and last days of those five being reserved principally for ceremonies, the last day of course marked by much celebration and festive ceremonies. Held once every four years, the Festivals in the Valley of Olympia ended on the fifth day with a final sacrifice at the altar of Zeus and the awarding of prizes and awestruck admiration of their "beautiful and good" athletes from young and old alike.

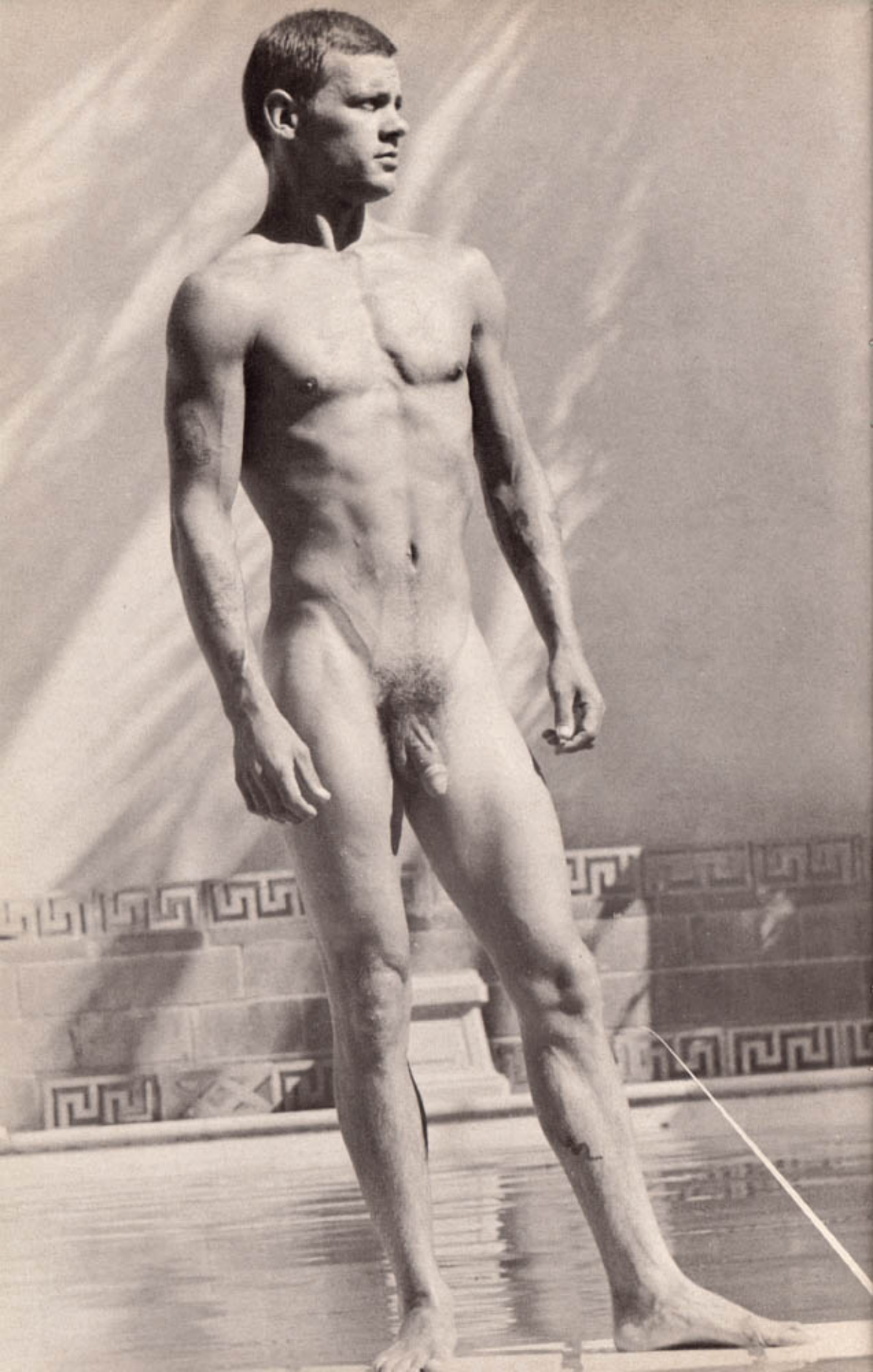


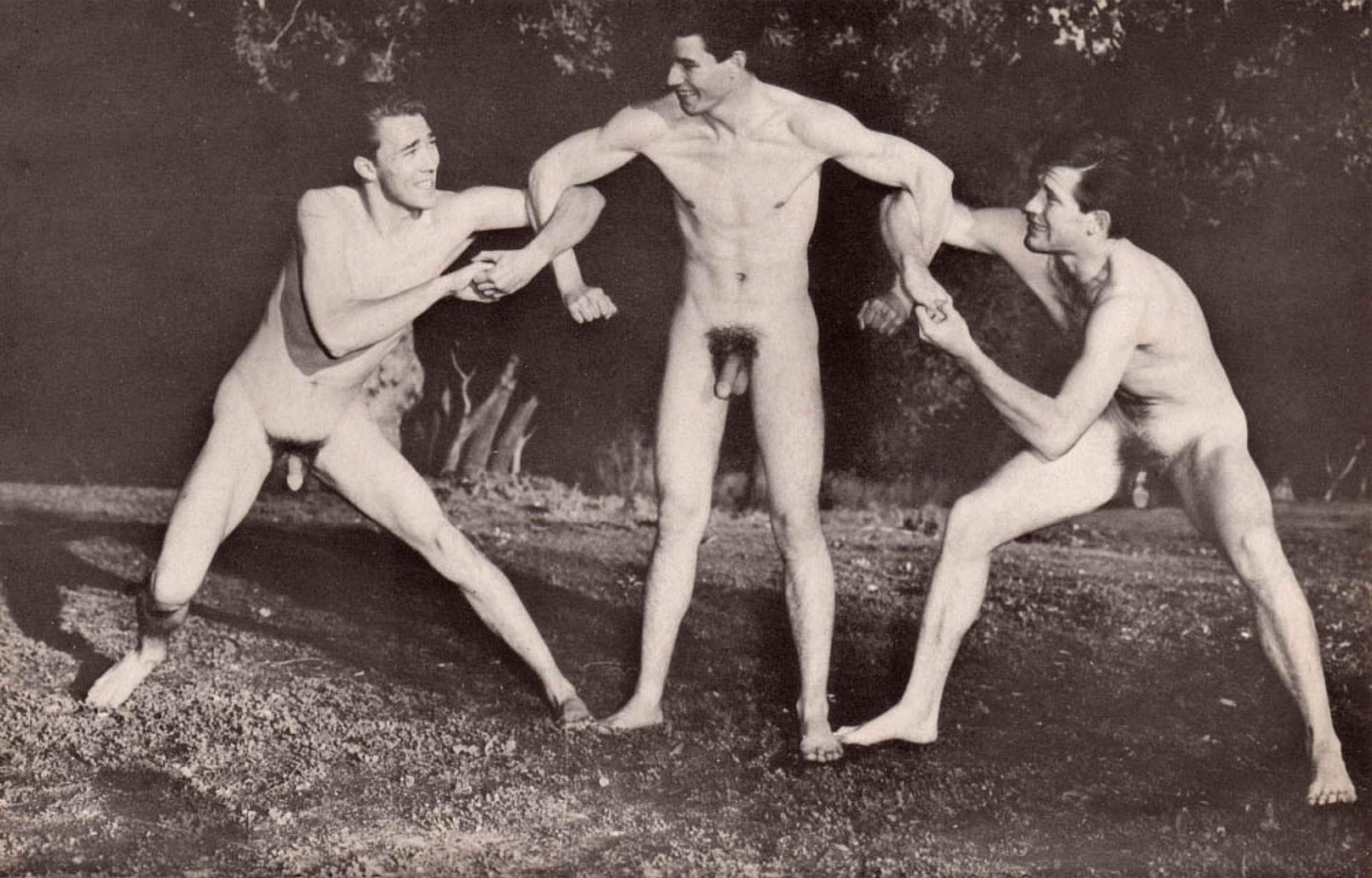
Victors of the games were well aware that their honor carried with it weighty responsibility. Youngsters sought their counsel on personal problems. Teenagers trying to reach the same level of physical and moral perfection asked their advice on how to come to the same success. Parents and teachers — moral guardians — pointed to athletes as examples to their children and pupils of "supreme beauty of body, mind and soul."

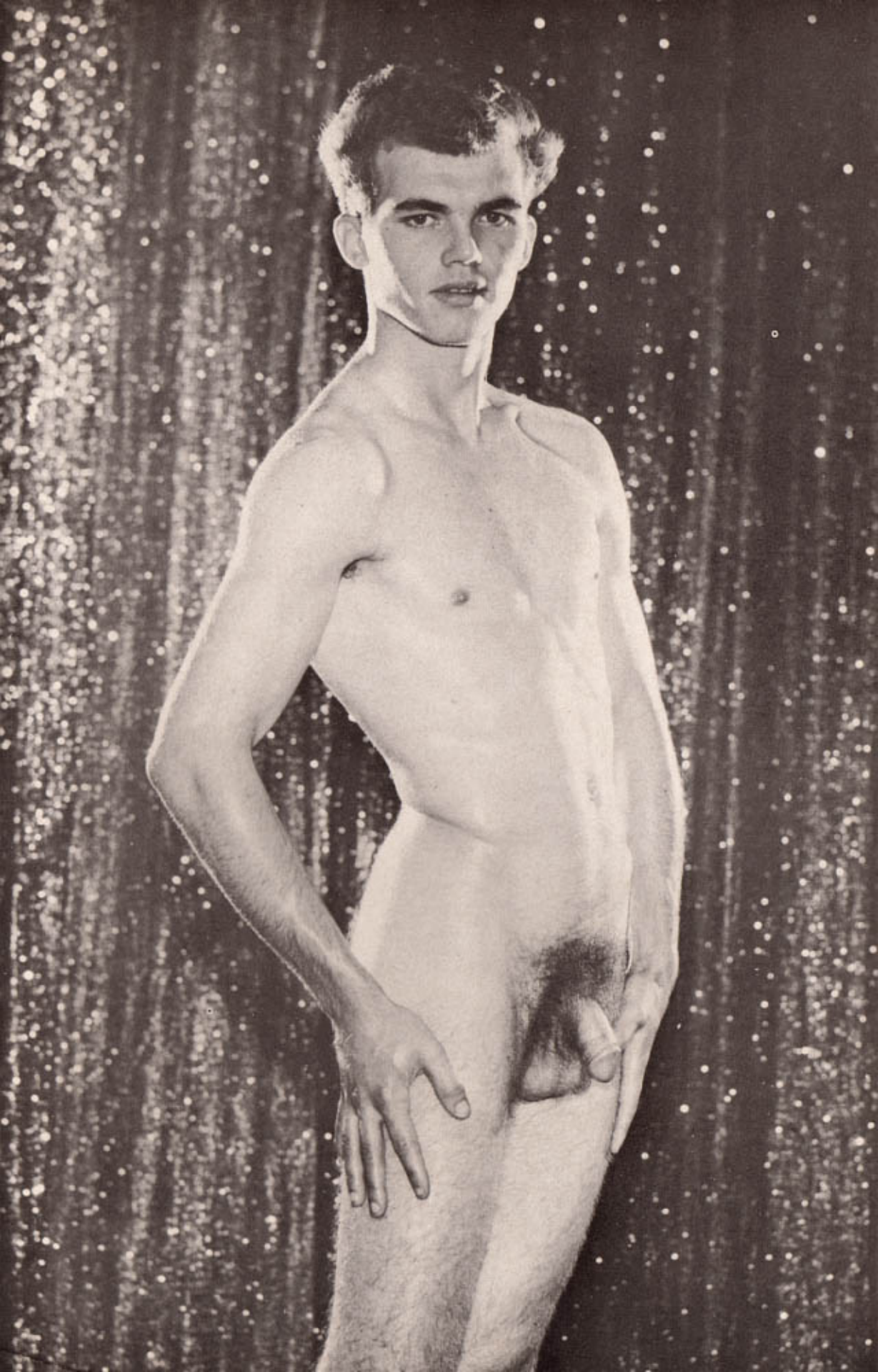
Each new generation has always had a special predilection for looking back to "times when" and holding up to itself as a modern ideal whatever shapes and forms of the beautiful it can find in past cultures that exist today only in their lasting impact on the continuing story of man. Coming generations will continue to look back on the past, for in the past are to be found experience, wisdom and often beauty, sometimes a primitive beauty, sometimes a classical beauty, but always a beauty enhanced by the intangible aura of "the good days." From the beginning of time, one of man's main preoccupations has been with beauty. The human eye tries to find proportion in nature, handsomeness in design and form and goodness in person-to-person relations. The naked male figure is no more and no less than a part of beauty in existence.











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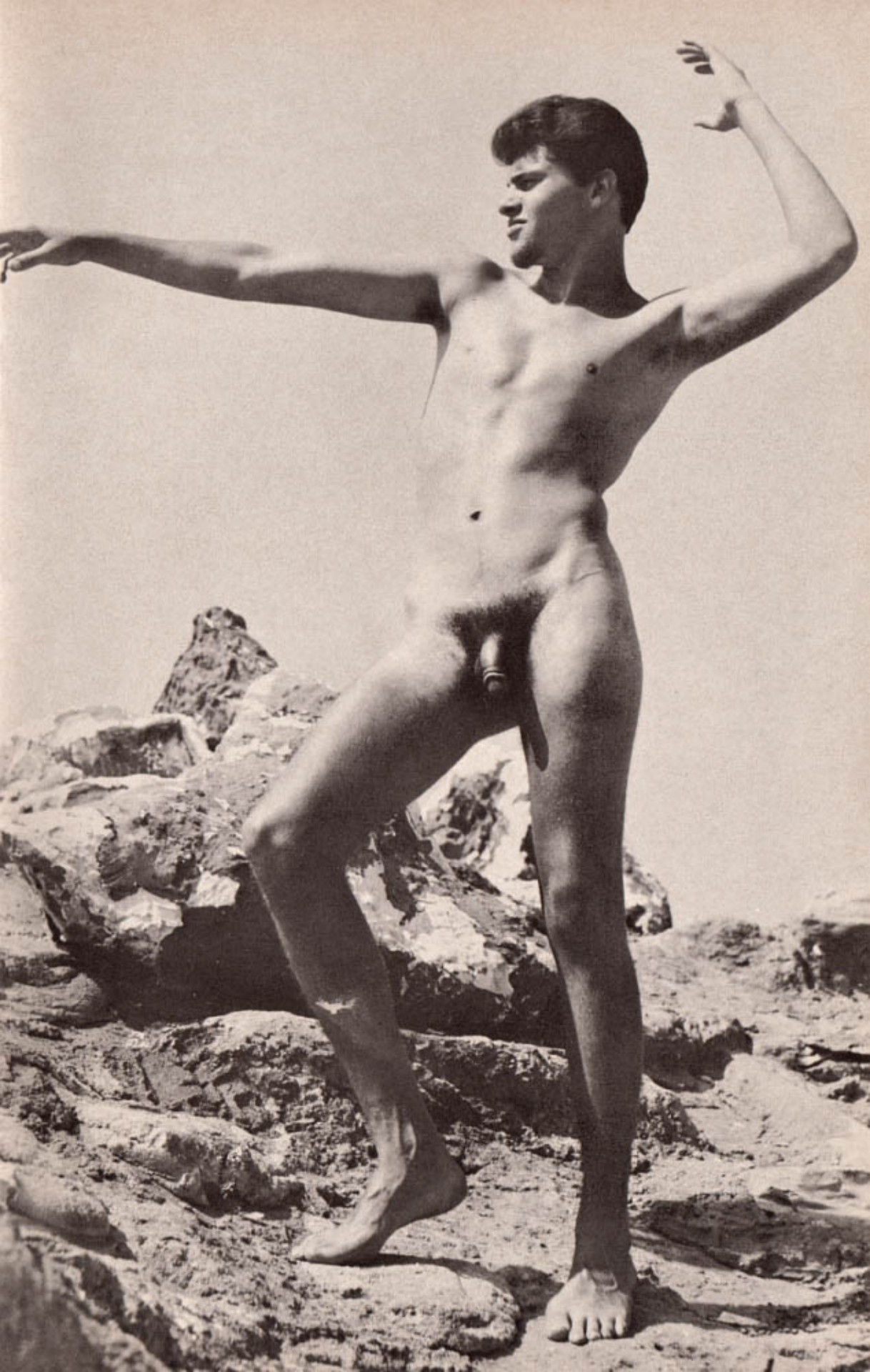

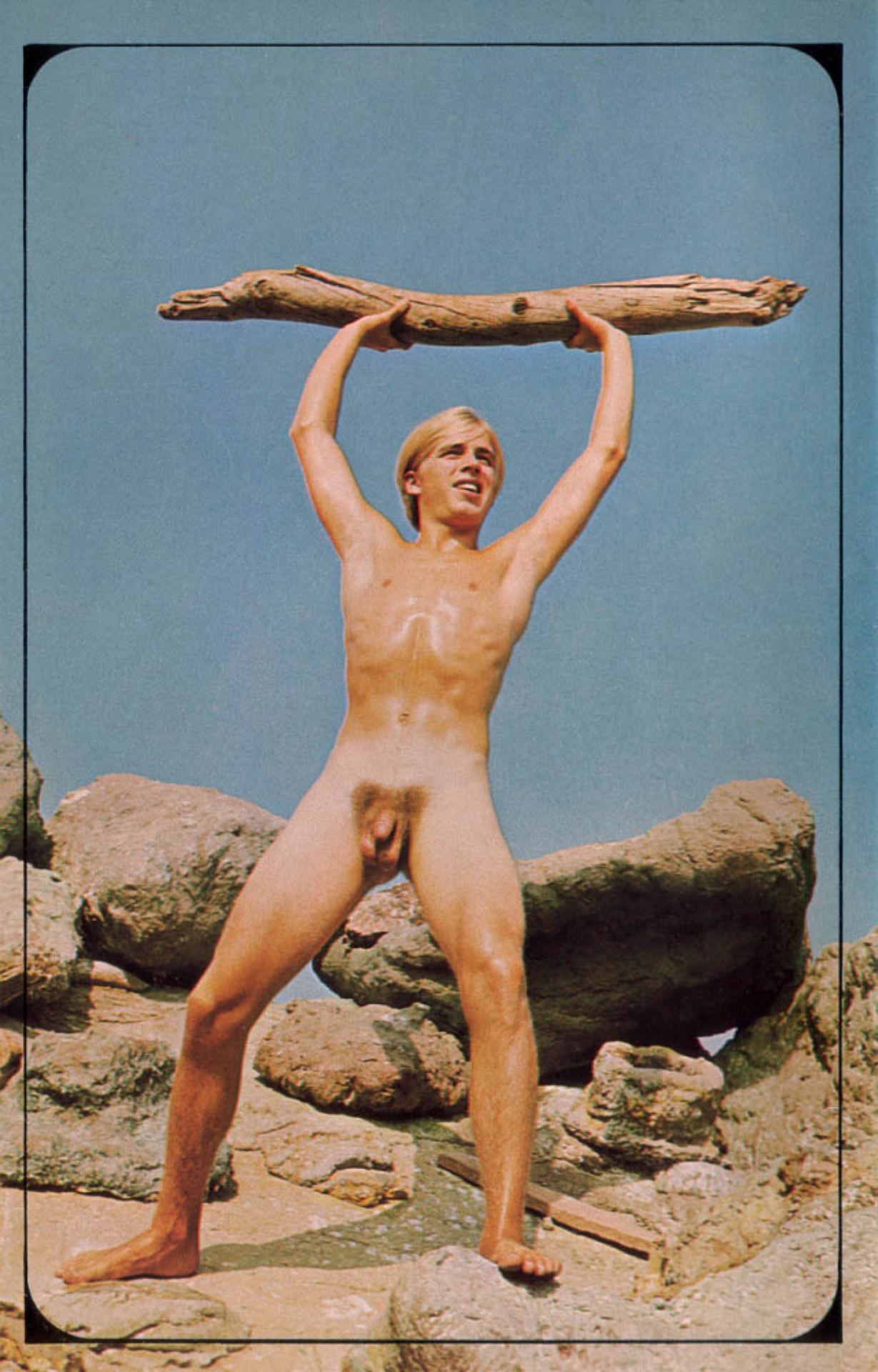

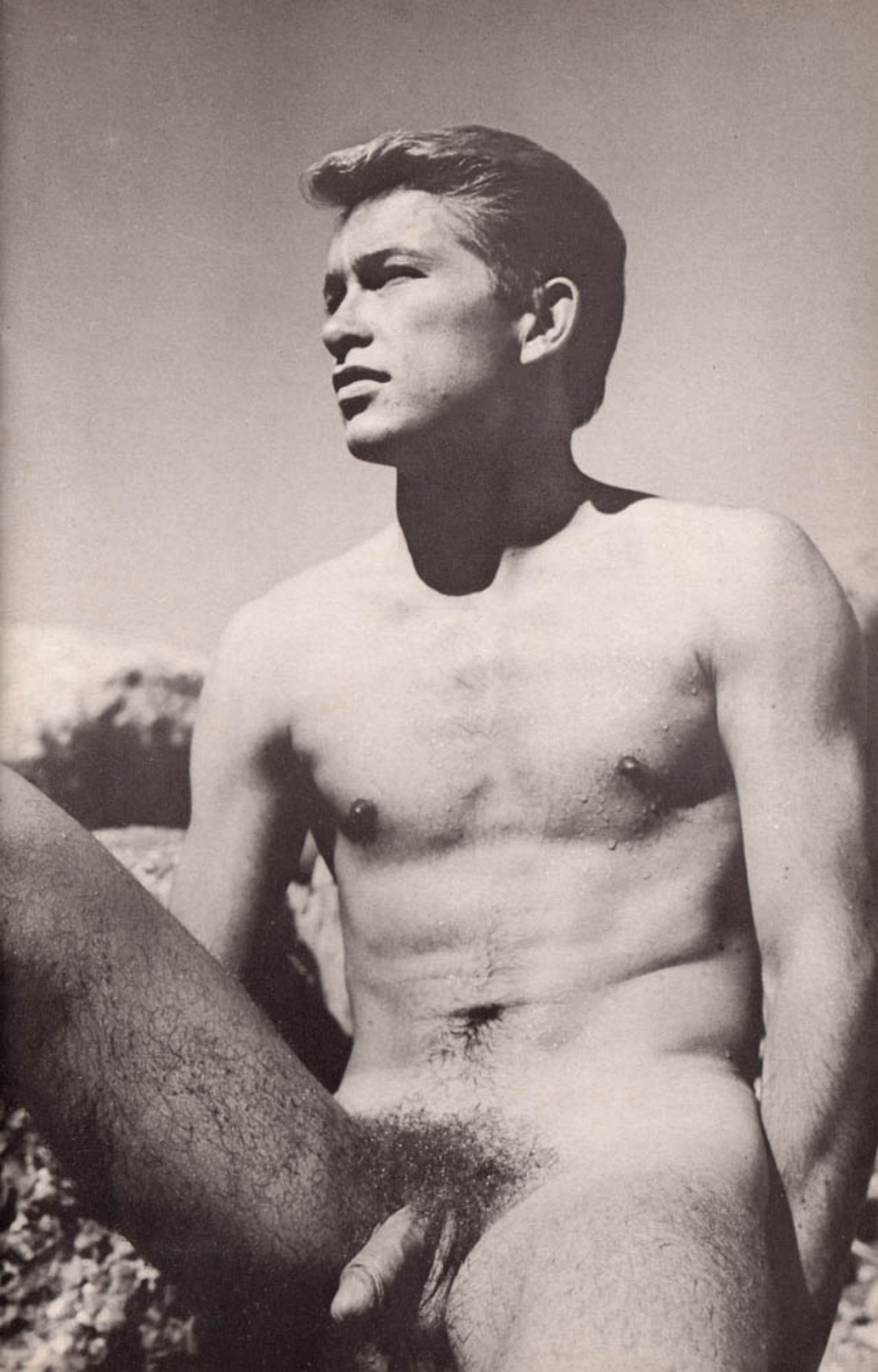

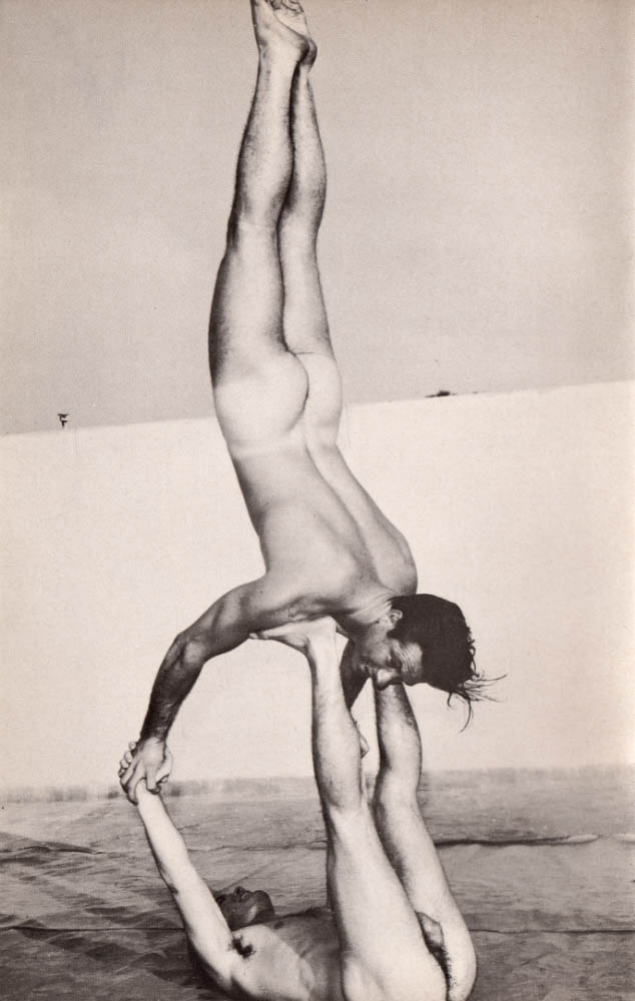

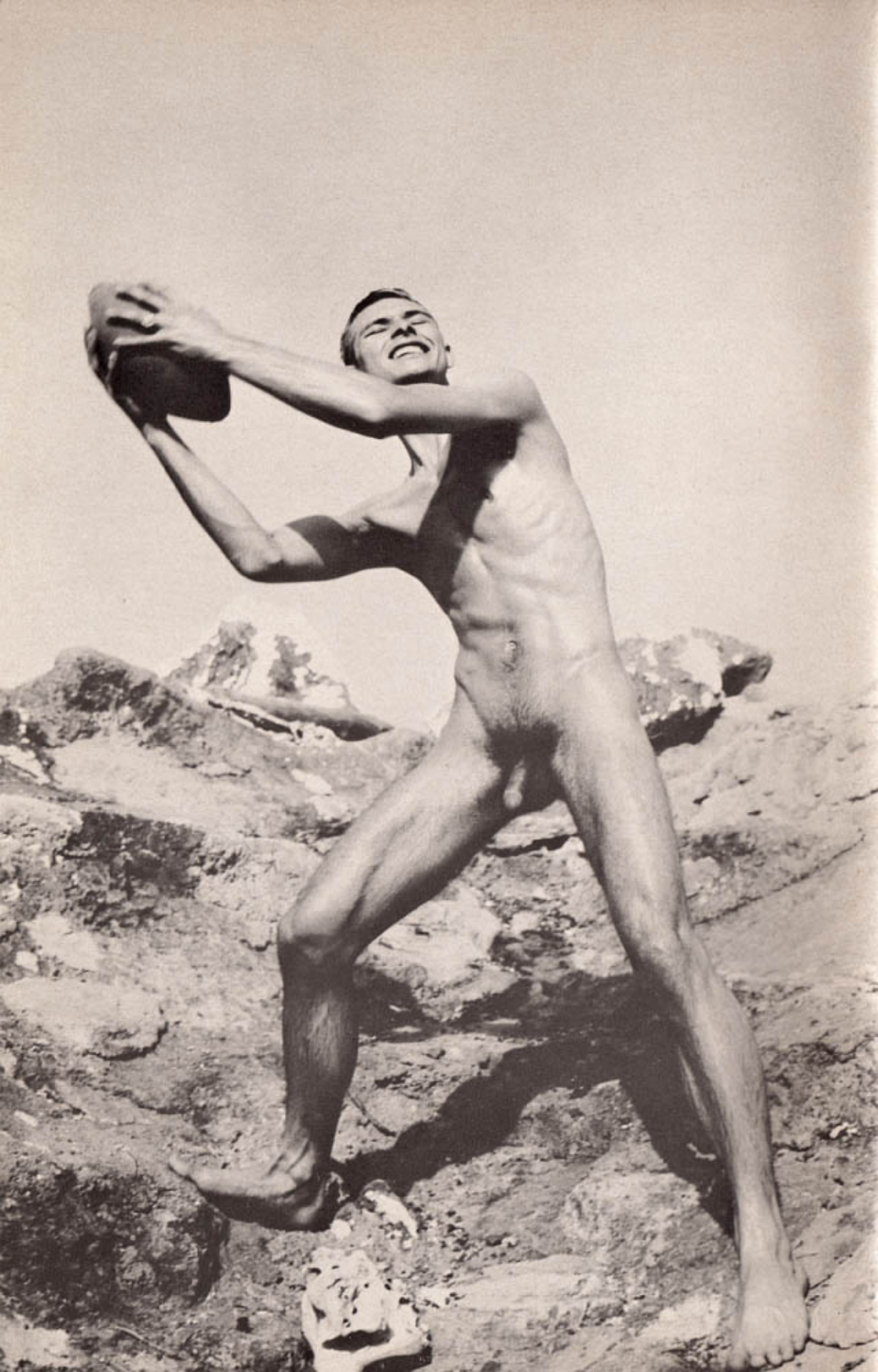

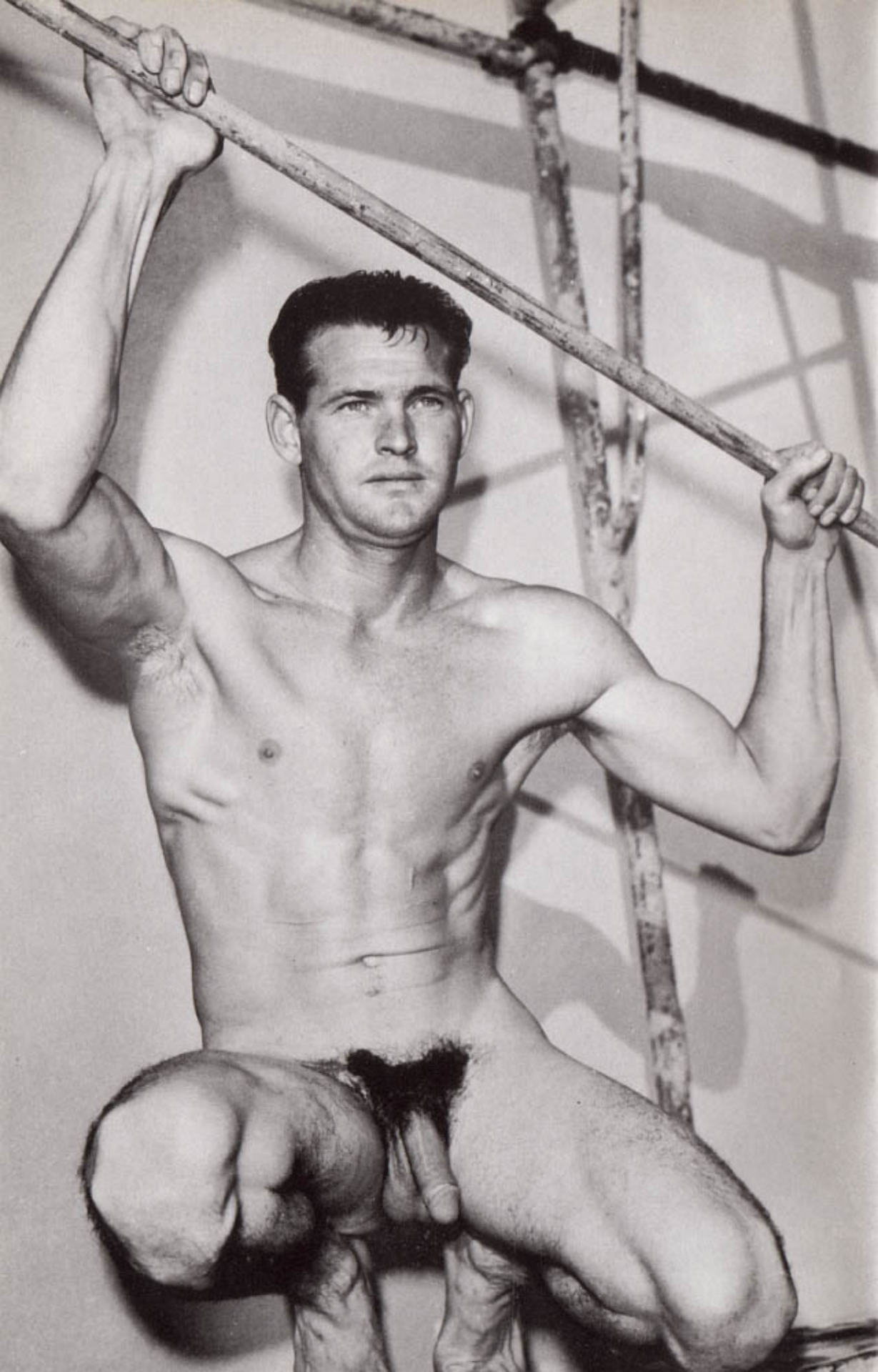

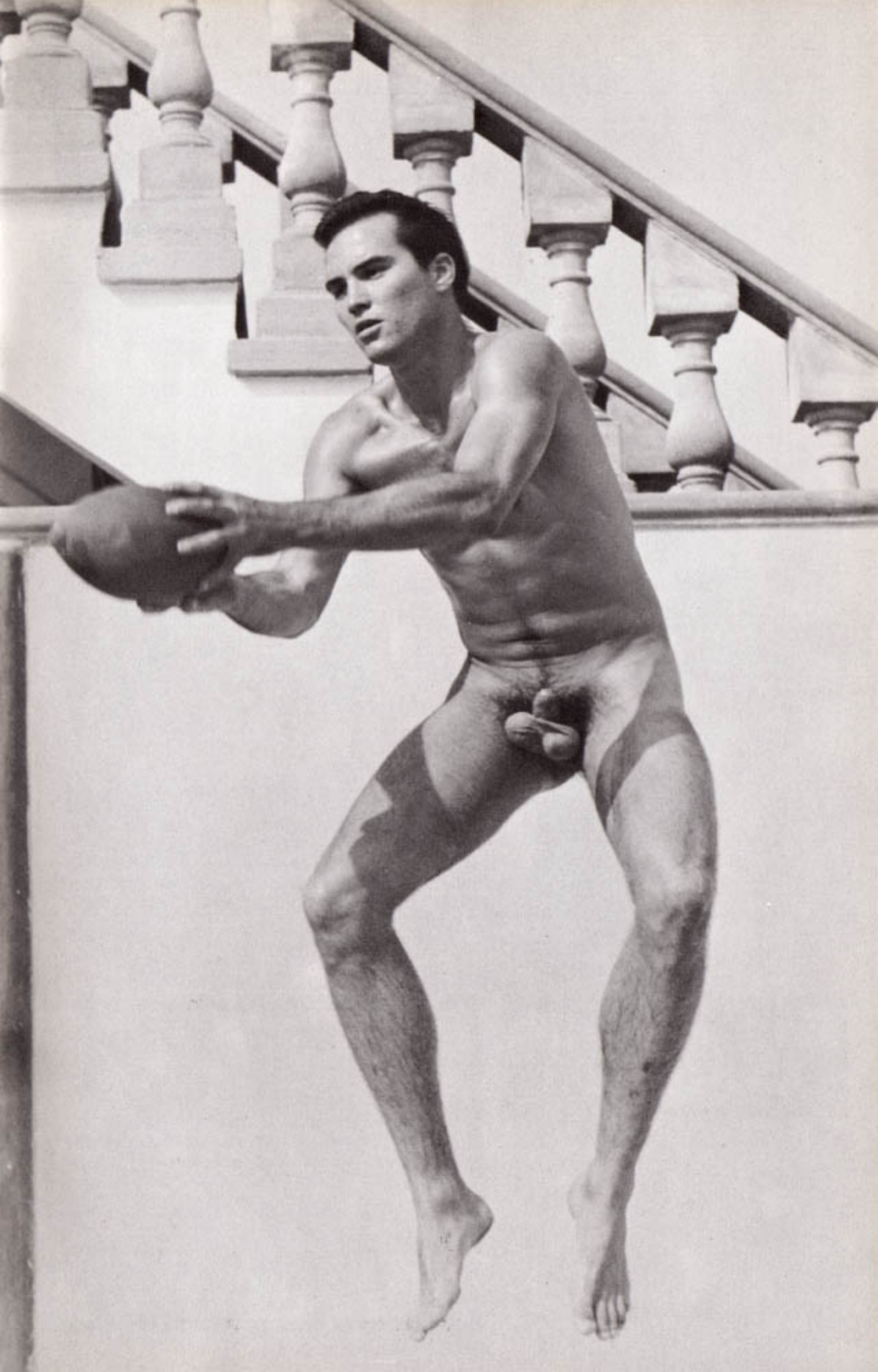

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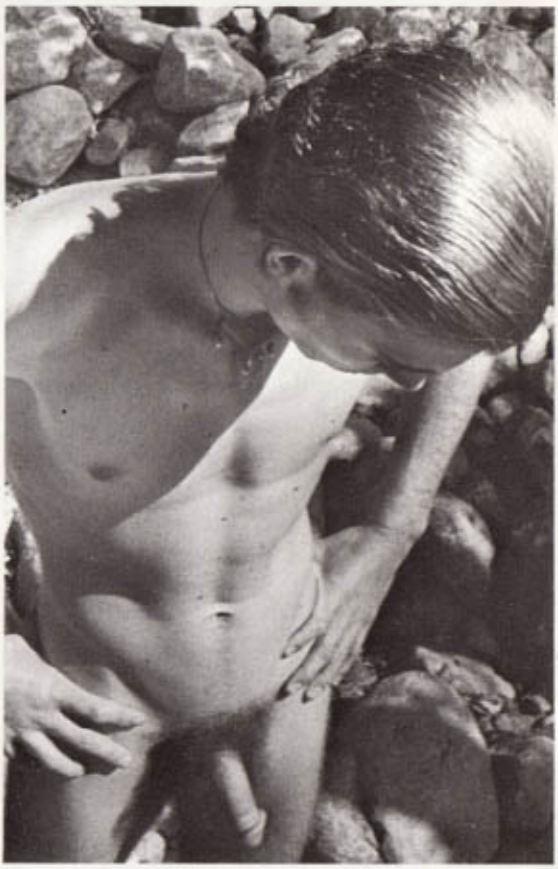

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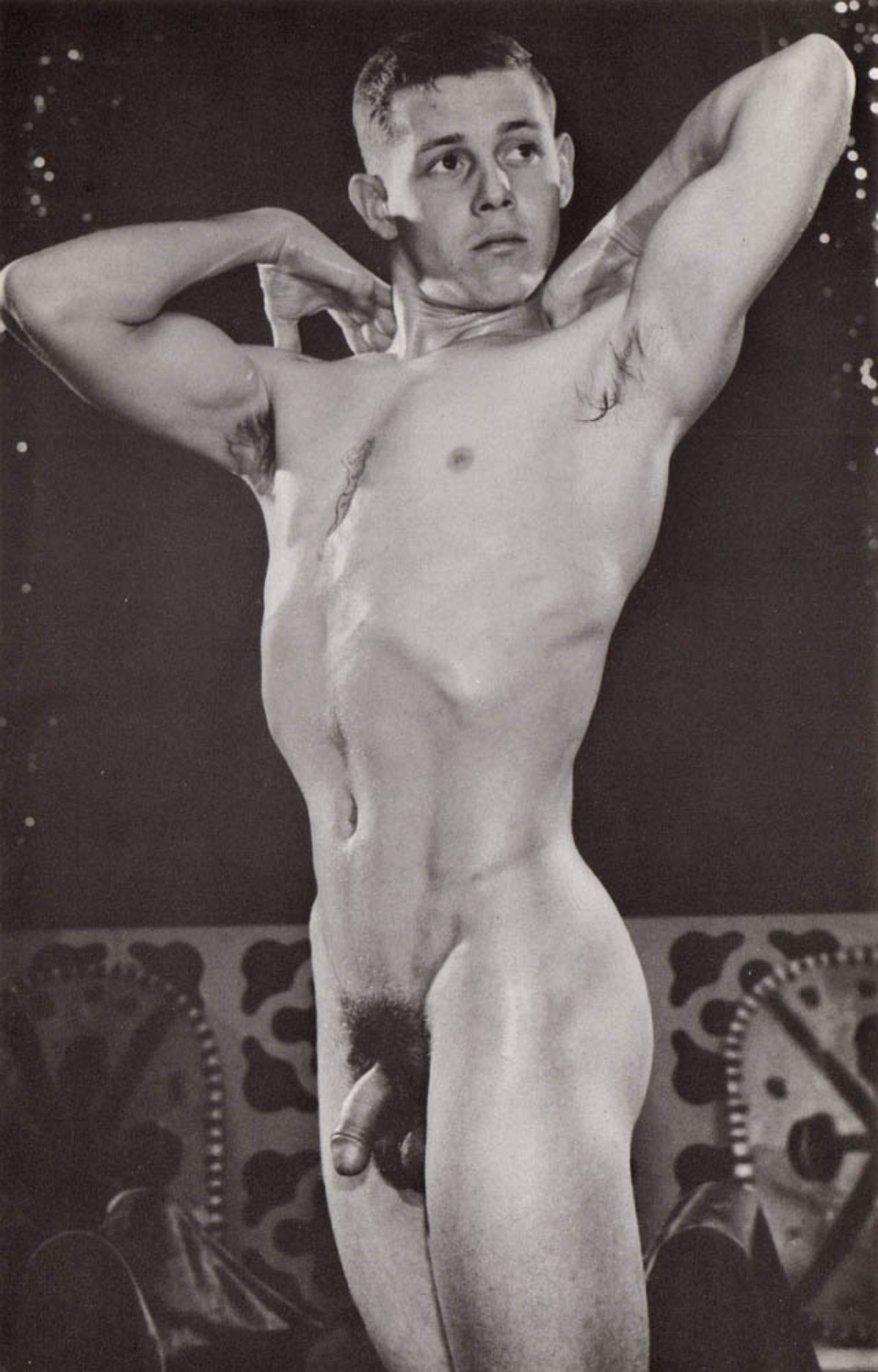

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